

# Anarchists and the 920





*I use a pram and I  
endorse this message*



## Anarchism and (Non)-Violence

By Black Bike

November 2014 Courier Mail Headline:

“Anti-G20 Activists Fight for Middle Ground, Their Own Respectability and Safety Backed Up by the Idea of Universal Morality and Society's Already Existing Power Dynamics”

Anarchism is associated in the popular imagination with violence, with bomb

throwing and black blocs smashing shop windows. In this context, many in activist circles spend their time bending over backwards trying to dissociate themselves from violence, yet never seem to take the time to actually critically consider the concepts of violence and non-violence. But this non-engagement means in practice that we hand the definition and evaluation of violence and non-violence over to the powers-that-are (i.e. the state, media, police etc). By relinquishing this conversation, and definition, we allow ourselves to be corralled into (now defined by proxy) “non-violent” (good) and “violent” (bad) protesters; as well as leave untouched the violence of the state, and the idea that the state is the legitimate holder of the monopoly on violence. Without any critical consideration of these concepts we allow ourselves to be de-toothed, cornered into behaving in whichever way the powers-that-are deem “good” which, in reality, means manageable and ineffective. In the following I'll

consider what violence and non-violence is; what underlies our particular version of non-violence, and our goals, strategy and tactics in reference to non-violence. I'll finish with what I see as some promising ideas for future political work.

Whether or not anyone explicitly defines violence and non-violence, a default definition remains in operation in both media and activist circles, and this definition is pretty problematic. The term “violence” encompasses everything from the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, to the destruction of shop windows in an anti-globalisation protest! How is it possible that we can speak both about war-as-violence and property-destruction-as-violence, as though these things are even slightly similar? Do these two extremes even really exist on some kind of spectrum of “violence”? And, in further considering our understanding of violence, what about complexities like violence in self-defence; personal vs. political violence; state vs. individual violence; property vs. personal violence and psychological vs. physical violence? How might thinking about these alter our understanding of violence and non-violence and, dare I even suggest, its legitimacy (or otherwise)? However, rather than constructively engaging with these complexities it seems we would much rather prefer to just advance, without thought, non-violent-this and peaceful-that. So let's talk a look at what lies beneath.

In the context of anarchism and the G20 the conversation, of course, is about the violence of property destruction – shop windows, police cars and the like. That focus is the first problem because, of course, the focus should

be on state and corporate violence perpetrated around the world in the pursuit of profit and domination. No one actually disagrees about this, the controversy comes with the how-to-achieve-this-[correct]-focus question. And this is where non-violent proponents state "...and that is why we cannot possibly [allow] shop windows to be smashed, because we can't afford any distraction from our messaging about the G20". So let's talk, firstly, about "distraction". The concern about "distraction" from our messaging is a concern about how the media and its consumers will understand us, our opposition to the G20, our ideas and intent. So we need to spend a bit of time thinking, firstly, about our understanding of the media and, secondly, its consumers.

My initial response to concern about the media is why be concerned? Anyone who has been involved for anything beyond about five political actions should be aware that the media (both mainstream and ABC/SBS) do not serve us. The media ignores issues we consider important; it misrepresents us, and it very much exists within the framework of the status quo (so it may differentiate between political parties, but never touch on the liberal-democratic system as a whole, or examine alternatives to this system). In short, the media is not our friend and does not work for us or our political "interests". So, by all means we can engage with it within this context, but let's not take it so seriously that we orient our political action around its coverage of us!

Secondly, and much more crucially, is the question: who are these media consumers that we imagine will be "distracted" from our message by the

smashing of shop windows? And why do we care so much about their perspective? This is actually an incredibly important point that, on further examination, has little to do with the political practices of violence or non-violence.

So, if you were to close your eyes and imagine the people tut-tutting behind their TV screens when they witness acts of property destruction, who do you imagine? Are they white/ indigenous/ ethnic/ rich/ poor/ educated/ uneducated/ brutalised by the police or at peace with the police? Media consumers are not a homogenous group who all understand what they see in exactly the same way (yet we relate to them as though they are!) And our desire to “appear” a certain way to media consumers is, necessarily, a desire to appear a certain way to a particular section of media consumers. And when I close my eyes and imagine this group, I imagine white, I imagine liberal, and I imagine middle class: a “group” that is certainly not lacking in any meaningful way in our society in terms of power, privilege, or voice.

But by “white”, “liberal” and “middle class” I’m not really saying that all the people who tut-tut about property damage at anti-globalisation events are white (skinned) *and* (politically) liberal *and* (economically) middle class. What I’m wanting to convey is that the *perspective* that tut-tuts can be found in the roots of white (culture), liberal (politics), and middle class (class). It refers to a perspective that is basically in acceptance of the status quo and its mechanisms of rule including (but not limited to): private property, the state (including its monopoly on violence), and relationships

of ruler and ruled.

If this is the case it's important now that we seriously ask the question: is the white, liberal, middle class perspective the perspective we want to orient our action (and our repudiation of action) around? And, if your answer is yes, then ask the question: is the tactic of pursuing (via an unfriendly media) the absence of images of property damage, so as to preempt any potential tut-tutting, a sufficient tactic for the goal?

For me, the question of who and what we orient our political direction and actions around is incredibly important. By orienting our actions around a particular, powerful perspective (while arrogantly pretending this is the *only* perspective), we actively disregard the people we should be listening to, talking and organising with. While non-white, non-liberal, non-middle class people are those we presume to speak for in our propaganda, our practice tells another story. We should be orienting our political actions around these perspectives, we should be accountable to these groups, in essence it's a question of “leadership”. Instead of striving for the acceptance of the white, liberal, middle class, we should strive to be led by those who are daily most brutalised by the forces of capitalism, the state, and physical and ideological systems of control. However, this is neither simple nor easy, it's not as though the people who are the most brutalised are necessarily any clearer about the systems of power that we're all operating in, and often they're very confused!<sup>1</sup> But it's absolutely necessary

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1 Here I see a great potential in the practice of “popular education” which some of us in Brisbane have been exploring recently.

work. More on this later.

The other part of the above statement is the “allowing” part: “...we cannot possibly [allow] shop windows to be smashed, because we can't afford any distraction from our messaging about the G20”. I use “allowing” here deliberately because we're not talking about a context in which some decide they want to smash shop windows, and some decide they don't. What I'm talking about is a context in which everyone, without further discussion, is informed that they are not allowed to smash shop windows, that their enactment of non-violence is a must. You would think that such a strong, uncompromising assertion would require a look at non-violence, a definition for absolute starters, but perhaps also an examination of the ideas that underpin non-violence or, even perhaps a consideration of the effectiveness of non-violence!? In my experience none of this happens, what I've experienced in its place, is an utter silence around these issues.

In the following I'll consider the hidden ideas that underpin our adherence to our particular form of non-violence: universal morality and personal safety, as well as look quickly at our (lack of) evaluation of political action in the context of goals, strategy and tactics.

In orienting our actions around the media and its consumers, while simultaneously demanding a particular behaviour from participants in political action, we assume the existence of a universal morality i.e. a morality that everyone shares, which includes, in part, a repudiation of violence. But is there a universal morality? Are there ideas about violence

that everyone shares even in the context of the complexities of violence mentioned above? I'd argue that there is not. I'd suggest that one's morality depends on one's circumstances, belief systems, and life experiences, and that not all roads lead to "non-violence". What, for example, might be the difference in outlook on violence between a person who's been targeted and brutalised by the police throughout their life, and a person who has rarely come into contact with the police? It's not necessarily straightforward of course, but the difference can be huge. This difference, I imagine, would most probably result in different understandings about the existence of violence in our society, who it's enacted against and how, and what it might mean to respond to violence. None of these understandings is necessarily "right" or "wrong", they're all true to their own experiences. But in *our* demand for non-violence we claim that one conclusion about violence (we must always act in "non-violence") is "right" while other conclusions ("violence" is reality/ sometimes justified/ complex etc) are "wrong" By doing this we assume a universal morality and so deny multiple other experiences, understandings and subjectivities.

The most serious part of this, again, is the question of exactly *whose* morality we're orienting our political actions around when we pretend there exists (and aim to enforce) "universal morality". As may be evident from the exercise above, the morality of (our particular brand of) non-violence is a particular, powerful and privileged morality, it's a morality that has its roots in the white, liberal, middle class, it's based on certain life experiences, certain circumstances, and the beliefs that follow from both. This doesn't mean it's "wrong" or "right", it just means that it's particular

(not universal). And, at the point of particularity it might make sense, again, to ask if *this* is the morality we want to enforce on all participants or perhaps, if it might make sense to “allow” people to be guided by their own morality on questions of violence and non-violence! It’s here that we encounter the sentiment that “...this is not possible because we must all be non-violent in order to ensure our and other’s safety”. I will deal with this point later.

Another idea that underpins the demand for “non-violence” is based on so-called strategy, “so-called” because, certainly in most of the circles I’ve come in contact with, in reality there is an almost total lack of engagement when it comes to developing political goals, and then working to achieve them via strategy and tactics. Let’s take a second to define these terms: “goal/s” refer to the outcome/s you want to achieve (long and/or short term); “strategy” is the path which you believe will lead to the fulfilment of the goal/s; and “tactic/s” are the individual actions which, taken in total, make up the strategy. Seems reasonable doesn’t it? Yet in my experience in Australia, the establishment of goals, (let alone) discussion about strategy and tactics is practically non-existent. Just let that sink in for a moment.

Regardless of the overt absence of engagement with goals, strategy and tactics, hidden ideas continue to inform and influence what we do, and why. The above-mentioned demand for “non-violence”, based on “universal” morality, the media and the (presumed) sensitivities of its consumers is, of course, premised on appealing to... no, actually, it’s premised on *not offending*, the greatest number of people. *This* is our

hidden “strategy”: not offending the greatest number of people (!!!) and non-violence, in the absence of any other goal or tactic, becomes both goal and tactic! Well at least we've set the bar low for success!

The “strategy” of appealing to the greatest number of people (or, here, not offending the greatest number of people) is perfectly aligned with the electoral democratic system we exist in. In this system it's the greatest-number-of-people that, as a group, are politically legitimate and that, the system holds, are valid in making decisions about the rest of society (or at least electing people who will then make those decisions!) Politicians and political parties clamour for this majority because they know that a majority in support of them (or at least less offended by them than their opponents), will ensure their political victory. Again the question must be asked – is this strategy in line with our politics? Do we see ourselves simply as another political entity clamouring for the majority, the centre, the mainstream? I certainly don't, and neither, once you scratch a little, do most of the people who identify as “activists” – yet our actions unthinkingly follow this route in our attempts to appeal to/ not offend the greatest number of people!)

In any case, if we do see ourselves as one political entity among many clamouring for the majority, we should definitely become smarter at doing this, at least the real politicians have political intelligence enough to differentiate between safe, marginal and unwinnable seats, and to concentrate their energies accordingly. We have no such political nous and instead continue to clamour ineffectively, with little to no targeting of our

messages or actions and little to no analysis or reflection on why “the masses” fail to follow us (despite our correct analysis!) Unlike us, political parties have goals (to win government), strategy (to win X/Y/Z marginal seats) and tactics (letterbox all the houses in a particular neighbourhood). How very sensible of them!

So, what is your goal at the G20? What is your strategy for achieving this goal and what are your tactics for achieving this strategy? In the absence of these, the default is a. to try to not offend the greatest number of people by, b. behaving in a non-violent way. This, I'd argue, is unlikely to achieve anything. Yet surely it does, because at the end of the weekend we'll depart victorious having achieved our “goal” of non-violence and, potentially (though we'll never know), having not offended the white, liberal middle class perspective, morality and political norms! Empowering wasn't it? Wasn't it? Wasn't it? Maybe not.

The relationship between the G20 and like summits, and the people who oppose these summits, is a relationship of intense control and containment. The state aims to control and contain in numerous ways in the lead up to, during, and after the summit, psychologically, legislatively, and physically. In this context what does it mean to be “violent” or “non-violent”? Activists got smashed in Melbourne and Toronto, if not physically at the time, then legally in the time following, but what about psychologically? What does it mean, in the context of intense attempts (and enforcement) of control, to refuse control, to refuse our assigned roles of compliant, “non-violent” protester, to successfully do exactly what the state is trying its

hardest to prevent us from doing – property destruction. How does it feel?

And, in reverse, what does it mean (psychologically) to adapt to increased control and containment? To be reduced to arguing about the size of signs, the correct location for protest and the ridiculousness of “prohibited” items? How does this feel? To have our political struggles, our political ideals, reduced to minutiae? To even engage in such conversations – “we have the right to do this and that”, “we should be able to go here and there” is insulting. Let us define our own political struggles. We can do as we're able, within the reality of the brute force of the state, we don't need to waste our time appealing for others to respect our “rights”, because the state, and its dispensing of rights, is fundamentally illegitimate, just ask (politically aligned) First Nations people. This doesn't mean we can't use this rhetoric when it's politically useful, but let's not get caught up in it, let's understand it for what it truly is: nonsense.

In any case, unless we have moments of empowerment, moments of real power against these multifaceted regimes of psychological and physical control, it's difficult to maintain hope or resilience in political action. And, I can honestly say, that thirteen years of non-violent, ineffective rallies and marches have done little more than disempower me, which is why I now rarely attend them, focusing instead, on actions and initiatives I consider more empowering, effective and in accordance with my actual (rather than pretend) politics.

The property damage that occurred in anti-G20 actions in Melbourne and

Toronto was not morally wrong; whether it was strategically mistaken depends on post-action evaluation including questions about who one understands to be one's allies (i.e. questions like, does media coverage matter? Why?) In terms of property damage in relation to psychological damage I doubt that property destruction was, in and of itself, psychologically damaging to protesters. I'd argue, in contrast, that much greater psychological damage occurs as a result of the intense and minute management of one's behaviour/ anger/ passion/ frustration in performing "non-violence" in the context of intense (actually complimentary!) attempts by the state to control and contain protest, and the consequent reduction of our politics to fighting for "this and that right" and against "this and that outrage". No doubt there was psychological damage to the people involved in Melbourne and Toronto as a consequence of summit and post-summit heavy-handedness, but to collapse the actions of the state with the actions of people involved in property destruction is mistaken. This, in fact, is exactly what the state would like us to do: take responsibility for state-violence: ensure that it doesn't happen in the first place by controlling ourselves and others, and place responsibility, for it when it does, on each other's shoulders. We should refuse to do this; we are not responsible for the actions of an illegitimate state and its illegitimate (monopoly on the) use of violence. Yet this is precisely what often happens because in our particular brand of "non-violence" it's not really about "us" being non-violent, it's more about us trying to ensure that the state is non-violent!

And this is where we return to the claim that "...we must all be non-violent

in order to ensure our and other's safety". Again, it must be said, that the "cause" of us not being safe during anti-G20 action, is, firstly because we are opposing very powerful forces and, secondly, because the state is determined to protect these powerful forces. To this end the state has various tools at its disposal: police and military, water cannons, tasers, guns as well as "enhanced" legislation; and psychological warfare, all of which exist to beat us down in various ways. *These* are the causes of us not being safe, not each other, and we should refuse outright to take responsibility for the actions the state takes in attempting to protect these powerful forces.

Secondly, the assumption that non-violence is about protection of oneself (and others we presume to speak for) is incredibly insulting to the best aspects of non-violent practice. Non-violence is not about keeping oneself safe! Non-violence is about placing oneself squarely in the path of violence in our struggle for social change (or whatever it is you claim to be fighting for). If your main "goal" in the "struggle" against the G20 is to keep yourself safe, for God's sake, please stay home and watch TV, don't expect events to revolve around you, you're a burden. This is not a safe context, there will be forces that have the means, social legitimacy, and desire to inflict violence on you. But this does not mean that people who are not able, for whatever reason, to confront state violence cannot participate in social struggle! There are plenty of contexts which are not (usually) in the direct line of fire from the state, and these contexts, in my opinion, are far more important in terms of actual movement building!

To sum up, this discussion has not really been about violence or non-violence in terms of advocating for either on the basis of strategy, morality or otherwise. It's mainly been about considering what underlies and bolsters our already existing (unthinking, unreflective) adherence to an (unexamined) non-violence. What I've argued is that underlying our adherence and demand for non-violence is our desire for respectability: a desire to appeal to white, liberal, middle class sensibilities, morality, and political norms (majority rule). In doing this we reconstruct and reinforce the white, liberal, middle class as neutral and all-encompassing, but they are far from both. The white, liberal, middle class perspective/ morality/ political norms are specific, and we should think very hard about whether this is what we actually want to orient our actions around. At the moment, by default, this is what we're doing, and it's at this juncture that the absolutely key topic of leadership arises.

The question of leadership, however, is not simple – it's not simple to understand, it's not simple to facilitate, and it's not simple to engage with, but I truly believe it's crucial if our politics are to be actually meaningful or useful in any way. Leadership, as I understand it, is the question of what we do and why, it's the question of who and what we are accountable to when we undertake political action. Most presume to speak for the downtrodden, the “workers”, the people on the fringes, yet rarely, if ever, listen to, or facilitate contexts in which these people can speak for themselves. This is attributable to several things, but one of them is simple, puerile (conscious or unconscious) arrogance, the belief that “we/I know better than they what is good for them”. Actually, you don't, and though

their words may be messy, it's your job to listen, and respond with action. Without this listening, and response, your actions have no relevance or legitimacy for the people you presume, and proclaim, to fight for.

Yet it's not this simple either. It's not simply a matter of finding an X/Y/Z person or group of people, listening to what they say, and following orders. Here there **must** be honest dialogue about perspective and action and this, I believe, is the most difficult part of the whole equation, because within this “dialogue” exists multiple, interlocking layers of power. How, for example, does a white woman “dialogue” honestly with a black man in the context of interlocking issues of race and gender (for starters), but also no doubt issues like class, age, education level etc. I guarantee it's not easy, but it's crucial. I think the answer to this dilemma lies, in part, in establishing genuine relationships of trust and friendship across “divisions” (as opposed to using people as political opportunities); also, within the context of these relationships, being able to have difficult conversations and ask hard questions. It means refusing to dismiss people or groups because they don't have the exact political analysis that we have; or because they're at a different place in understanding X/Y/Z point; it requires us to be honest with our politics while also understanding that different people and groups exist in different contexts. In short, this is a process of understanding who we should work with, and why, and then working with them, carefully but genuinely. This is dealing with messy, real life politics and people, something we've avoided for far too long. But without this engagement we will continue to be aimless, ineffective, irrelevant political cults, unthinkingly reproducing the power dynamics that are already in full swing

in our society, and no one really wants that.<sup>2</sup>

The other part of the above discussion critiqued our absence of goals, strategy, tactics and, crucially, post-action evaluation in our “organising”. It's difficult, of course, to “evaluate” anything when there is an absence of explicit goals, but the absence of explicit goals does not mean there are not implicit goals. Unfortunately our “goal”, in the context of a march and rally at least, (where the issue of non-violence and violence emerges) boils down to a single thing: non-violence, by protesters. Non-violence is our goal and non-violence is our tactic. So, we need to ask ourselves: is this adequate for the task at hand? Again, it's difficult to evaluate this when there is no analysis of the task at hand (and, therefore, no goal). I'd argue though, and I'd hope others, with reflection, would agree, that non-violent marches/ rallies/ etc are unlikely to achieve anything – even in relation to the rather conservative (highly contested) terrain of convincing the middle ground about our ideas. Yet so it is that we spend an awful lot of time and energy advancing and enforcing non-violence (while failing to even discuss it) in pursuit of respectability from the middle ground. For this time and energy we have little political gain to show for it, and, I'd argue, have managed in the process to alienate the “non-respectable” in our midst – those we should actually be listening to, talking and organising with.

We're currently operating in a situation in which an (unexamined) non-violence is demanded on the basis of a media that doesn't represent us or

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2 For these ideas on leadership I acknowledge the writing of Harsha Walia, on the work of No One Is Illegal, which is outlined in the amazing book “Undoing Border Imperialism”, specifically pages 187-201.

our views; and the perspective and morality of the white, liberal, middle class. We are using non-violence as a parameter on which to understand, and abide by the confines of respectability; as well as a way to keep ourselves safe! In this context I'd suggest it's appropriate to step back and take some time to reflect on what we do, why we do it, and who we're accountable to. What are our goals, strategy and tactics? Maybe we could even start thinking about how we might evaluate what we do – not on the basis of a false “universal” morality, but on the basis of effectiveness or empowerment or even our own political compasses! What I'm advancing here is not an easy task, it's much simpler to continue proclaiming that we know what is best for others (and then concluding that they are insufficient for not coming on board), but it's actually our approach that is insufficient, and our relationship with “non-violence” is a part of that.

### Further Reading

Peter Gelderloos, “How Non-Violence Protects the State”

Ward Churchill, “Pacifism as Pathology”



# WHAT IS THE G20?

What is the G20, apart from being an annual event on the activist summit calendar? and what's so bad about it?

The short answer is it's a kind of global executive committee for capitalism which hands down recommendations for individual states to implement. These are often contradictory, but the aim is the security and stability (or image of) markets across the entire globe. It consists of 19 nations (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, United Kingdom, and United States) and the EU. Let's look at the excellent work of the g20 education group to flesh this out (highly recommended article).

The G20 evolved out of the G7/8 which has a history of involvement in quelling the social struggles of the 60s and 70s. The G20 has three main forms of action. The first and most concrete is that the various members can commit to carrying out domestic policy as part of a more coordinated plan. The second is that the G20 can decide to act as a global bloc to intervene in and steer other multilateral forums such as the UN, the IMF, WTO, WB etc. Thirdly, it can act as a diplomatic arena where complex issues can be discussed and new initiatives launched.

The G20 has an increasing relationship with, and an incorporation of,

liberal ‘civil society’ elements, including youth, trade unions, NGOs and academics as represented in the Y20, L20,C20 and T20 respectively. This seems to be an important part of how the G20 attempts to achieve a sense of legitimacy while addressing various criticisms that it is unrepresentative of the broader population.

The G20 faces a difficult dilemma: it needs to support and coordinate economic stimulation to *drive growth and job creation* whilst addressing the challenges posed by *increasing debt*. The Leaders Declaration commits to the seemingly contradictory goal of both ‘*promoting labour market adaptability and efficiency*’ (ie: a casualised, submissive workforce with little security) and ‘*ensuring adequate labour protection*’. If these seem to be *unsolvable* contradictions it is probably because they are. Whilst it would be correct to see the G20 as the executive board of global capital this **doesn’t mean that it is greater or more powerful than the global economy itself**. This economy remains largely stuck following the 2007 economic crisis. Attempts to address these issues though cuts to social spending have produced few positive results but great misery.

The point is, no obvious solution within the framework of the system itself appears possible. **In the discussions amongst the Education Group this seems to be the foundation for a serious, mature and radical critique of the G20: that it can’t solve, and instead simply reproduces, the deep structural problems of capital, as opposed to the G20 itself being the source of some problem.**

The G20 members want to stimulate demand, reduce debt and ensure social cohesion – but really don't have the ability to do any of this. Nor should such efforts be welcomed by the people of the globe. These commitments are about increased state spending on activities aimed at increased corporate profits, forcing the costs of social reproduction back in the home (and therefore onto the shoulders of mainly women) and disciplining and re-orientating the labour force. In sum, it means that not only will we have to continue to experience the global crisis, but that the G20 is attempting to put more of us to work for less.

However, the G20's commitment to economic stimulation and financial regulation, and its attempts to increase participation and representation at its forums, means that opposition from a social democratic or liberal perspective will probably be muted. **The current activity of the G20 is only really objectionable if one objects to capitalism in total. The impact of the G20 can only be understood in a much broader sense – how does capitalism impact on the lives of people in Australia?**

### **So then what is the purpose of our opposition?**

Capitalism and its structures are profoundly irrational and sociopathic. In its never ending quest for profit & resources the system and those who benefit from it commit numberless atrocities as a matter of routine daily functioning. Capitalist social relations violate humanity and dignity of people, their workplaces and communities and continue to ever-increasingly threaten us with the destruction of the entire planet. We want

to dismantle the structures of boarder imperialism, ecological insanity, colonialism, oppression, and the capitalist class system which shapes these.

The effects of colonialism, capitalism and the extension and imposition of western rule have created economies that displace and compel people to move, yet which at the same time denies culpability and accountability for displaced migrants. The material structures which ‘secure the economy’ have killed, tortured, occupied, raped, incarcerated, sterilized, robbed land from, pillaged, stolen children from, introduced drugs into, sanctioned vigilante violence on, denied public services to, and facilitated the hyper exploitation of broad sections of the globe. The g20 means freedom for capital and money; not for people.

The predominantly Indigenous Zapatista movement put it well when they say:

*Throughout the world, two projects of globalization are in dispute: The one from above that globalizes conformity, cynicism, stupidity, war, destruction, death, and amnesia. And the one from below, that globalises rebellion, hope, creativity, intelligence, imagination, life, memory, building a world where many worlds fit.*

*Capitalism is social war: It destroys certainties capable of giving any measure of meaning to existence on this earth. It is the first truly Total war; not a war on all fronts – a war with No front. Anything that allows us to identify ourselves as existing independent of capital must be destroyed, or*

*reduced to the quantifiable exchangeability of the world market. Cultures, languages, histories, memories, stories, songs, ideas and dreams must all undergo this process; For the capitalist market the ultimate goal is to make the entire world a desert of indifference populated only by equally indifferent and exchangeable consumers and producers... ”*

If the g20 serves as simply a public display of legitimacy, then what can we hope to gain by opposing it? What's the point? We can show others across the globe that people here too oppose this madness. The g20 draws in broad layers of society with various grievances and our aim should be to better coordinate this and produce new forms of cooperation and bonds of solidarity.

We've already seen the demonisation of any form of dissent, mainly through newspaper articles which demonise anarchists and try to introduce false binaries into the movement. Another great article from *The Word from Struggle Street* (wordpress) puts this well:

“We can except in the lead up to the actual G20 meeting more stories of this type. Whatever the actual motivations of the journalists we can assume the impact that they will have. Such stories work to intimidate the population and divide organizers and militants.

The G20(Safety and Security) Bill 2013 gives the police extensive powers to arrest protesters and break up demonstrations. Under this legislation a protest is only a lawful assembly if (amongst other reasons) ‘an offence is

not committed under this Act by at least 2 persons who are acting in concert and participating in the assembly...a violent disruption offence is not committed by a person participating in the assembly'. The bogey-man of violent anarchists will be manufactured whenever the state needs to smash heads.

From past experiences we can assume that often protest organisers who are courting mainstream respectability, hoping to use the media to their own ends, or simply promoting their own organisations often fall for the bait of the media hype and quickly make public statements distancing themselves from those other protestors real or imagined that the state and the media are gunning for. This is an error. We don't get to decide the dividing line between 'good' and 'bad' protestors, between 'peaceful' and 'violent' action. The state will do that and the media will declare it. Any attempt to legitimise such a division is just setting all of us up to receive the wrong end of a baton. But all who struggle deserve our solidarity. Hobgoblins dreamt up by the media shouldn't be fed and the errors of the past not repeated."

Unfortunately we've seen the logic of the media spread into the movement itself, which is plagued with artificial divisions which reduce dissent to questions of violence/non-violence, good protesters/bad protesters. The epitome of this has seen people from within BrisCAN itself argue that certain types of protesters should be handed in to the police. Most prevalent is the idea that we need to show 'truth to power', the idea that if we show a controlled protest movement that doesn't need force laid down

upon it then we'll show that the entire spending on security and the g20 is a farce. This strategy holds that the best way to go about fighting attacks on wages, living conditions, services etc is to point out the flaws in the pro-cuts arguments in a civil way, have a polite march and suggest alternative policies which would avoid the need for cuts.

The government are making these cuts because they suit the rich, the wealthy and the powerful. They can get away with it not because they are right, but because they hold power. They won't be swayed by argument, because from such a position of strength all arguments can be safely ignored. If necessary they can enforce their decisions using the media, police and courts. Yet the power of a government is based upon our compliance. If the state wants to do something that we don't like, we can start to fight back with occupations, breaking A-B march routines, economic-blockades, etc. This is where the true hope lies: Not in winning some abstract moral argument or in politeness, but in building our bonds of cooperation, sustenance, coordination & solidarity, and rediscovering the ability to take control of our own lives and communities. Instead of falling back on if we're being the right kinds of protesters, we should be thinking of if the tactics we're using are bringing ourselves closer to where we want to be. Who are we accountable to? The ruling class media which will skew us no matter what we do, or to ourselves?

**The state is a social relationship;** a certain way of people relating to one another. It can be destroyed by creating new social relationships.

**NO JUSTICE ON STOLEN LAND!**



# **POLICE AND SECURITY**

The police are an organisation for which, whether a person supports their authority or not denotes them as revolutionary or reformist. The question of the police when it comes down to it is simple, the police exist and have always existed, as all security forces, to protect power and privilege within a given society. However, to have an understanding why this is we must understand their position in the two tiered class society of the bourgeoisie and proletariat. Police are of the working class, but this is not the issue, the issue is whether they are *for* the working class. They also differ however in their level of support for the owners of property, the bourgeois, being willingly prepared to use brute force and kill us in the name of protecting the property owning class and its insurance policy the state. The police are the domestic armed forces, charged with maintaining public order over the working class allowing the rich to have free reign to exploit the populace so long as they do so within certain boundaries set by the state.

The goals of a revolutionary are to dramatically change the nature of capitalism and the state, through social revolution, whether according to

the principle of no rulers no exploiters meaning antiauthoritarians or those who believe in authority, especially in the future society e.g. secret police, gulags, etc— authoritarians who collectively are opposed to the gatekeepers of bourgeois society, the police. Reformists however, are not opposed to the police, because they believe they can reform society and maintain those reforms without ever having to combat the systems gatekeepers to topple it and build it all anew. This difference is tactical also and even infects many in the revolutionary movements. Namely the religion of non-violence above solidarity, which entails acting and judging all struggle through the religion of non-violence rather than the principle of solidarity above all else and only breaking such a pact when acts committed unnecessarily heinous towards people not property. A reformist views solidarity as a slogan with limited meaning which can be broken for the smallest infraction of the ‘rules’ set by an unaccountable leadership whose privilege is secured by this society and its police and security forces.

The position of support for the police denotes the level of privilege of the person espousing it being either a privileged worker with better pay, conditions, lifestyle and ‘middle’ class mindset. Or being a member of managerial class, the internal class division of the working class who manage capitalism for business owners being police, managers with power over hire and fire or whose job is to regularly do so, trade union officials, politicians, scabs etc. The police represent the most brutal enforcers and managers of capitalism who regularly harass, intimidate, beat and kill people at the bottom of society e.g. working class Indigenous people, the

homeless, peoples of colour, working class youth, working class women, the working class in poverty, the working class in general and people in the queer community. To be in support of the police would mean a lack of direct contact with them on a regular basis or in some cases no real contact at all. This denotes a level of privilege within these people and shows that those who most need to get organised are not having the opportunity to do so, due to the very existence of this privilege. If privileged people wish to be involved or engaged with a movement for revolutionary social change they must do all they can to negate such privilege and provide solidarity and the ability to organise to their fellow workers. To not do such would be to continue purely reformist activities rather than anti-authoritarian direct action based non-hierarchical organising and continued support for the police which in the opinion of anarchists in a movement which seeks to achieve anything is unacceptable and immoral.

